

Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Meeting held on Tuesday 13 June 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chamber, the Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES - PART A

- Present: Councillor J Buttinger, Councillor S Fitzsimons, Councillor P Hay-Justice, Councillor J Prince, Councillor D Speakman, Councillor P Thomas
- Also present: Councillor Stuart King, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment,
Councillor Robert Canning, Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
Heather Cheesbrough, Director of Planning and Strategic Transport
Stephen Tate, Director of District Centres and Regeneration
Rachel Flowers, Director of Public Health
Tom Sweeney, Programme Manager
Ian Plowright, Head of Transport
Neil Andrews, Wheels for Wellbeing
Craig Hollins, Bikeability
Paul Lowe, Bikeability
Austen Cooper, Croydon Cycling Campaign
- Apologies: Councillor P Clouder

MINUTES - PART A

A22/17 Election of Chair

Councillor Jan Buttinger proposed Councillor Fitzsimons to be Chair of the Sub-Committee and Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice seconded the proposal. The Sub-Committee voted and **RESOLVED** to elect Councillor Sean Fitzsimons as Chair of the Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year.

A23/17 Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Chair informed the Committee that Councillor Jan Buttinger would be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year.

A24/17 Minutes

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 28 March 2017 as a correct record.

A25/17 Disclosure of Interest

There were none.

A26/17 Urgent Business (if any)

There was no urgent business.

A27/17 Committee Membership

The Committee **NOTED** the Committee membership for the 2017/18 municipal year.

A28/17 Cycling Strategy

The Head of Transport introduced the report and gave a presentation to the Committee on the benefits and barriers to cycling. It was noted that the benefits of cycling were wide ranging, from health benefits to individuals to a reduction in congestion and pollutants. While it was noted that the centre of Croydon was difficult for people to travel through on a bike there were a number of opportunities to increase cycling in the borough.

Transport for London (TfL) reviewed people's concerns in regards to safety regularly and had found that safety perceptions had changed little in recent years. The biggest danger to cyclists was large vehicles, in particular lorries, however a number of initiatives had been introduced and it was hoped that the risk to cyclists would reduce.

Within Croydon it was noted that a barrier to cycling was the topography of the borough, however analysis of figures and modelling suggested that if electric bike (E-Bikes) were used more in the borough that cycling rates would increase. However the borough had the second lowest rate of ownership of bikes in the capital and this noted to be an area that needed to be addressed.

Cycle storage was also outlined as being a barrier to more people cycling as people were concerned about the security of their bikes. Within the borough a number of schemes for cycle storage were being introduced and new developments were required to provide cycle storage.

The Director of Planning and Strategic Transport stressed the need to normalise cycling within society and to change behaviours so people used their cars less for short journeys and accepted that cycling was a relatively quick form of transport. Cycle parking was further noted to be an important area of focus as people needed to be sure their bikes would be secure when storing them and that adequate facilities were available.

The Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment confirmed that the Strategy contained within the agenda papers was not the final version and it was intended to gain the views of stakeholders and Members before the final version was agreed.

Representatives of the Bikeability scheme in Croydon informed the Committee that the programme was backed by the Department for Transport to train people to cycle. In Croydon, 2945 children were trained in the previous year, which was relatively good for an outer London borough. There were also adult courses which ran with Public Health and had around 35 people attending during the summer.

The adult cycle training courses looked to encourage people to cycle by building their confidence. It was noted that there was a huge potential demand to increase the number of people completing short journeys by bike.

The Director of Public Health informed the Committee of the health benefits associated with cycling, many of which people were unaware of including improved chances of surviving breast cancer and reducing the effects of dementia. It was stated that there was concentration of road casualties rather than the number of lives saved by cycling. There was a need to overcome all the barriers associated with cycling including the persons of residents with regards to safety.

The representative of the Croydon Cycling Campaign stated that the Strategy was welcomed and it was hoped that there would be positive outcomes from it being adopted. It was noted that many cyclists struggled to travel across the borough to reach the established cycle routes and segregated lanes, and there was a need to enable transport choice across the borough.

It was felt that there was a need to focus on the town centre to enable people to cycle to and through it which would facilitate ensuring the town centre did not grind to a stop due to the volume of traffic. It was further suggested that the council should re-bid for a Mini Holland scheme and ensure TfL felt confident the council would use the funding effectively and there was cross-party support for improve cycle infrastructure.

A representative from Wheels for Wellbeing informed the Committee that the organisation had been founded in 2007 and provided inclusive cycling sessions for disabled people aged from 2 to 102. The organisation had become increasingly a campaign group which sought better infrastructure and facilities for disabled cyclists. It was stated that there was not only a need for improved facilities there was a need for a change in culture and recognition of disabled cyclists.

The Committee were informed that Wheels for Wellbeing had

undertaken an audit of cycling strategies across London had noted that only 1% of mentions in the strategies were in reference to non-standard bikes. It was felt that it was important to recognise that not all disabled people were car drivers or used public transport, and that quite often bikes were a mobility aid. Furthermore it was stated that there was a need for legislative changes to recognise bikes as a mobility aid and to not caution those who used tricycles in non-cycling areas as a mobility aid. It was felt that there was a great potential to increase cycling among disabled people.

The Committee suggested there was a need for more specific figures which related to Croydon and for the Strategy to contain specific targets to encourage residents to start cycling. Members further suggested there needed to more consideration given to work of organisations such as Wheels for Wellbeing which also assisted the elderly and helped to combat isolation.

Members noted the need for a culture change as in some communities it was seen as a status symbol to drive a car and it was suggested that this may be one of the factors for the fact the cycling community did not reflect the population of London. It was felt that further work needed to be undertaken to engage those communities where driving was aspirational.

The Cabinet Member stressed that one factor which needed to be taken into consideration was the resources that were available and ensuring those resources were used effectively to tackle the areas of greatest potential and to success achieving the quick wins.

It was noted that improved infrastructure in the town centre was the focus as it was where the quickest gains could be made, however a number of BAME communities lived around the town centre and there was a need to engage with these communities to increase cycling figures in the borough.

The Director of Public Health stated at present Croydon needed to develop the infrastructure and to establish a starting point from which engagement with different communities could be done. The London Borough of Hackney was mentioned as an area that had seen increased cycling figures in recent years and this was due to the council initially starting very small and then building up to larger infrastructure and engagement programmes. Officers felt that it was pertinent to start with the quick wins which it was hoped would begin the process of normalising cycling within the borough and making it more inclusive and reflective of the borough.

The Head of Transport informed the Committee that the draft Strategy did include a suggestion to undertake individual travel plans for households around the town centre, which it was hoped would facilitate in informing residents of the transport options that were available to them and encourage residents to be less reliant on cars.

In response to the aim of making cycling inclusive representatives of

the Bikeability scheme noted that 70% of participants in the adult courses were females, whereas women only made up around 20% of cyclists on the road. It was noted that there was a need to make the most of the enthusiasm for cycling by tackling the barriers that mean people do not cycle regularly. It was further noted that cycling instructors had also previously worked with the Lake Foundation to increase BAME cycling in the area.

The Croydon Cycling Campaign representative stressed there was need to move around the idea that cyclists are middle aged men in lycra only and invest in infrastructure to make it more inclusive and safer. It was noted that Croydon had the benefit of learning lessons from elsewhere in London when implementing new infrastructure.

Members agreed that safety was the area of greatest importance and some Members suggested that if a cycle lane was introduced there should be a requirement that cyclists use it rather than other routes. It was further noted that it was important that cyclists wore appropriate clothing and maintained the lights on their bikes.

The Head of Transport informed Members that TfL estimated that around 645,000 bike trips were undertaken each day in London which equated to around a fifth of daily tube trips. Croydon equated to around 1% of that figure and TfL data suggested that this figure could be increased significantly with the right infrastructure.

The Committee considered the topography of the borough and the barrier to cycling this could be for some residents and noted that there was the option to walk up hills pushing bikes if necessary or E-Bikes were available that assisted cyclists to cycle uphill when necessary. The Chair suggested that the council run an event and encouraged councillors to trial E-Bikes and encourage residents to use them also.

The Director of Planning and Strategic Transport agreed that the south of the borough was particularly challenging due to the topography of the area and that a promotional event on the benefits of E-Bikes would be of assistance to encourage greater uptake of the bikes.

In response to Member questions officers confirmed that the Mayor's transport strategy was due to be published on 19 June 2017 and would be reviewed by officers once published.

The Committee noted that with higher number of cyclists there should be fewer cars producing pollutants, however queried whether the current air quality was discouraging people from cycling. It was noted that recent reports had suggested that being a passenger in a car was more dangerous in regards to pollutants than walking or cycling. The health benefits from cycling were still better even on days of high pollution levels.

Bike security was discussed by the Committee as an important area

of consideration as many cyclists were concerned about possible theft or vandalism of their bikes. Members were concerned that many bike garages or hangers were not sufficiently secure and suggested there should be a requirement to make them have the same security as the front door of developments.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that security was an important factor and was an element of the Strategy. Furthermore, the Cabinet Member confirmed that he had spoken to the Mayor of London Walking and Cycling Commissioner in regards to specific concerns around the East Croydon station bike storage and the need for a secure cycle hub.

The Committee raised concerns that there was not a strong emphasis in the Strategy on encouraging young people to start riding a bike as it was felt that if young people were used to cycling they were more likely to continue in later life. Members recognised it was sometimes difficult to engage all schools due to the majority no longer being local authority run, but stressed the need to work towards achieving 100% coverage for the Bikeability scheme.

In response the Cabinet Member confirmed that he would expect hard objectives within the delivery plan that work could be measured against. There was a recognition that encouraging young people to cycle was important.

Representatives from the Bikeability scheme in Croydon noted that a lot of work had been undertaken to include cycling as part of the national curriculum which would improve participation figures, however it remained a conversation to have with schools on an annual basis due to turnover of teachers in the schools.

Members noted that many children who had undertaken the training had found it to be very helpful. Having more independent children was seen as positive, however it was necessary to address the safety concerns of parents and for there to be some flexibility to enable those young people who did not do the course still undertake training.

In response the representatives of the Bikeability scheme informed Members that courses did run through the summer holidays during which around 160 participant were trained annually. Concerns were raised by the Croydon Cycling Campaign about the number of parents who drove their children to school and suggested showing parents the proposals to improve infrastructure and query whether that would encourage them to no longer drive.

Officers confirmed that work was continuing on refining the Mini-Holland proposal, as shown at appendix 2 of the report, which included the use of some Greenways through parks. These Greenways it was felt would be the easiest routes to implement. The proposals also sought to link to established and planned cycle routes outside the borough to enable residents to have a linked up route in

and around the area.

Members further noted that many people would look to use the parks to increase their confidence in cycling, however the byelaws that were in place restricted this. It was felt that these should be lifted to enable safe cycling as long there were appropriate speed restrictions and requirements for cyclists to be courteous to other park users. Officers confirmed that the review of parks byelaws was being undertaken and work was being undertaken to implement 2km of cycling routes in parks initially. A review of the 2km would be undertaken before the remaining 24km of routes would become cycle routes.

In response to Member questions officers confirmed that they were looking at the Yorkshire Bicycle Library and reviewing whether a similar scheme would be appropriate in Croydon to provide a bike hire service in the borough.

Members noted that another 34 cycle hangers were planned and queried where the funding was coming from for these and were informed that initially the funding came from TfL, however they were now funded out of s106 monies.

In response to Members concerns in regards to the tramlines officers confirmed that proposals to improve cycle safety when crossing tramlines had been reviewed by TfL and Tramlink, however there were no readily available options which could be retrofitted. Officers were, however, working closely with TfL to ensure the second town centre loop would be safe for cyclists by having a segregated cycle lane down Dingwall Road.

In conclusion the Cabinet Member noted that there was growing cross-party support for cycling from the outer London boroughs who regularly made the case for TfL to provide funding for cycle infrastructure, and this would continue.

In reaching its recommendations, the Committee made the following **CONCLUSIONS:**

- Endorsed the Strategy and the areas of focus to overcome the barriers and to normalise cycling within the borough;
- Acknowledged the need to shift concentration from traffic incidents involving cyclists to the lives saved from cycling;
- There was an opportunity to increase the number people of cycling through the use of E-Bikes;
- Welcomed the commitment of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment and the Director of Planning and Strategic Transport to promote E-Bikes, such as through a councillor led event;
- Endorsed the focus on improving cycle facilities and infrastructure in town centres to reduce the number of short car journeys made;

- Welcomed the work of organisations such as Wheels for Wellbeing, the Lake Foundation and the Bikeability scheme to engage all communities to start or return to cycling;
- Noted the opportunity to encourage young people to cycle to school through School Travel Plans and encouraging schools to participate in the Bikeability scheme;
- Welcomed the review of parks byelaws and the importance of ensuring that a right balance was found between cyclists and other park users;
- Welcomed the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment raising concerns regarding bike storage at East Croydon station and requests a review of the whole station area; and
- Welcomed the work of officers to review bike hire schemes such as a Bike Library and suggested the introduction of cycling clubs and competitions within schools.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Cabinet that:

1. The Cycling Strategy be adopted;
2. Greater emphasis be given to the health benefits of cycling and the lives that could be saved from cycling;
3. A promotional campaign be undertaken to inform residents of the benefits of E-Bikes and an event be arranged to encourage councillors to trial them;
4. Greater emphasis be given to schemes to promote cycling among young people and encourage all schools to participate in the Bikeability scheme;
5. Consider encouraging schools to introduce cycling clubs and competitions; and
6. The review into byelaws of all parks continue and to ensure the right balance be found to ensure cycling in parks was found to ensure safe cycling and enjoyment of parks for all.

A29/17

Responses from Cabinet

The Sub-Committee noted the responses from Cabinet following the recommendations made at the meeting held on 22 November 2016 and Members stated they had been unable to find any additional information on the council's website with regards to disposing of paint cans. The Chair suggested that officers be requested to provide a copy of the information that had been circulated at Neighbourhood Recycling Centres and the link to the relevant webpage.

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the work programme for the 2016/17 municipal year.

A30/17

**[The following motion is to be moved and seconded as the
“camera resolution” where it is proposed to move into part B of
a meeting]**

Not required

MINUTES - PART B

None

The meeting finished at 8.28pm