

TO: **PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

17 November 2016

FROM: **STREETS & WALKWAYS SUB-COMMITTEE**

8 November 2016

Traffic in the City of London

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of the Built Environment which provided an overview of the current traffic situation in the City of London and suggested a range of measures that might be introduced or strengthened to improve traffic flow. The Chairman welcomed additional comments to be sent prior to the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 21 November 2016, where the minute would be received.

Officers outlined the current level of congestion in the City and how this had increased in recent years. Recent developments, such as the introduction of the Cycle Super Highway and the closure of Tower Bridge were exacerbating the problem.

The measures proposed were focused on the area in which the Corporation could have most impact on congestion, the "macro" level demand for street space. All possible options, including those that might be considered radical, had been included in order for Members to provide a steer for the development of the strategy. It was noted that the developed strategy would be considered in partnership with the Mayor of London's report on the issue and the impact of all supported proposals would be carefully measured prior to final approval.

Members discussed the range of potential measures proposed and made suggestions for further considerations. The following points were made:

- Members did not support the proposal to introduce tolls on bridges, as it was felt the divide was arbitrary and risked dividing North and South London. It was also felt there was a risk that drivers could be charged twice with the current congestion zone charge being in effect.
- The use of night time servicing for businesses was discussed and the success of a similar scheme during the Olympics was noted. Some Members felt that such a scheme should be limited to before 11:00pm to prevent noise pollution for residents.
- The Deputy Chairman felt that given the negative impact of the new segregated cycle super highways (on traffic congestion) matters should not be made worse by building any more of them.
- A Member asked that a greater and more efficient use of the Thames and Walbrook Wharf be added to the proposals and this was supported by the Chairman.
- Members expressed a desire for further thought to be given to Smart City solutions.
- The use of technology as a means of monitoring road usage as an alternative to tolls was raised. It was felt that this presented privacy issues on an individual level, however technology could be used more effectively for real time solutions to congestion issues.
- Members discussed the impact of buses in the City. It was felt that many were not being deployed effectively, were run on overly long routes and were often empty. Officers undertook to engage with Transport for London on the issue.

- A Member raised the prospect of utilising Corporation assets, currently set aside for vehicle storage, for alternative development. Another Member felt that Car Parking was essential for reducing congestion.
- A Member felt that Park and ride schemes offered a viable solution.
- The promotion of electric vehicles was discussed. It was acknowledged that although an encouragement towards electric would not solve congestion issues it would contribute to improving air quality.
- There was a discussion about the extent to which the City was a conduit for traffic. It was felt that any scheme affecting the two major corridors through the city would have an impact on wider London.
- The need to work in conjunction with the rest of London was noted as a priority to reducing both congestion and pollution.
- In regards to the proposal to extend the Congestion Charging Zone a Member commented that this could lead to more traffic in the existing zone, as the financial disincentive for vehicles in the newly extended areas to enter the existing zone would be removed.

Members recognised the report contained a number of possibilities to address a very difficult problem - the sub-committee felt that at this stage the majority of them (apart from bridge tolls) should be explored further whilst recognising that some of them will not prove to be practicable.

RESOLVED – That the Sub-Committee:-

1. agrees the next steps as set out at paragraph 41-45 of the report;
2. agrees an overarching objective of reducing traffic in the City and that this should be emphasised in the next draft of the Local Implementation Plan (LIP);
3. agrees sums of £50k and £40k respectively towards appointment of consultants to advance the City of London's approach to consolidation centres and appointment of a FTE post, on a one year trial basis, to investigate how better construction and servicing/delivery planning might alleviate City congestion; and
4. supports the consideration of all proposals laid out in Appendix 2, with the addition of an investigation into river use, but does not recommend the introduction of tolls on bridges.