

LOCAL PLANS SUB (PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION) COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 6 March 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Local Plans Sub (Planning and Transportation)
Committee held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on
Wednesday, 6 March 2019 at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

Christopher Hayward (Chairman)
Deputy Alastair Moss (Deputy Chairman)
Randall Anderson
Mark Bostock
Deputy Keith Bottomley
Marianne Fredericks
Alderman Gregory Jones QC
Dhruv Patel OBE

Officers:

Peter Shadbolt

1. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies.

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 9 October 2018 were considered and approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

Facilities for Public Cycle Parking (page 5) – A Member made reference to the comments made around this at the last meeting and the fact that e-bikes would require Wi-fi signal access. She went on to state that there were many Wifi blackspots within the City – some around the Guildhall complex – and added that the new development at 120 Fenchurch Street had also impacted on Wifi access for some mobile phone users. She questioned what Officers and developers were doing to address this. Officers undertook to raise this matter with Strategic Infrastructure colleagues in the City Surveyors Department and seek a response.

4. **UPDATE ON THE LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION**

The Assistant Director (Planning & Policy) provided Members with a verbal update on the Local Plan consultation.

Members were informed that the Plan had been out for consultation from November until February. All City residents had been contacted regarding the Plan and emails had been sent to over 500 recipients on the Department's mailing list. Members were informed that 175 responses to the consultation had been received to date which, whilst lower than anticipated, was approximately double the number of responses received for previous consultations. Officers reported that, whilst the CPA had around 150 members, they had chosen to submit a single, collective response.

Members were informed that the Local Plan had received lots of press and social media coverage since the launch of the consultation period. Officers reported that key issues that had emerged so far indicated that there was strong support for 'greening' in the City and for efforts around managing intensification in the City Cluster. Concerns around the protection of views of St Paul's and the Tower of London had also emerged as key. Developers had expressed concerns around the cumulative impact of the City's policies.

Officers tabled details of the City Plan Drop-In Sessions that had taken place throughout the consultation process as well as Stakeholder and public meetings. It was reported that this Committee would be tasked with looking at the responses received in greater detail in due course. The Assistant Director (Planning & Policy) highlighted the Youth Engagement Event that had taken place. He reported that the group involved had been aged 17-24 years and that there had been 38 participants. He reported that the group had been very engaged and tabled an evaluation report compiled from the feedback, outcomes and learning from the youth consultation event.

A Member stated that he was currently acting as Chairman for the Partnership of Young London, a London-wide youth group, and suggested that Officers could also be engaged on the Local Plan here if it was thought to be of some use. He applauded their efforts in actively engaging young people in this consultation. It was noted that the CPA also had a 'next generation' body that might be useful in terms of future youth engagement efforts.

The Assistant Director (Planning & Policy) stated that, interestingly, the event had revealed that the group were sceptical of the Cultural Mile, the new Centre for Music and the need to relocate the Museum of London. They stated that they felt unengaged with these proposals. Members highlighted that part of the issue here could be a generational divide in terms of the definition of culture. It was recognised that the City could and should do more to address these concerns - for instance around the wider promotion, inclusiveness, affordability and accessibility of all of its cultural offerings. It was suggested that this be fed back to the Cultural Mile Director.

The Chairman reported that it was proposed that the Local Plan be brought back to this Committee in greater detail in May and asked that the Town Clerk identify a suitable date for this meeting alongside relevant Officers. It was noted that a new Chairman and Sub Committee membership would have been established by this stage.

A Member referred to the concerns raised by the industry in relation to the cumulative impact of the City's policies and suggested that it might therefore be necessary to prioritise these.

Another Member picked up on comments that suggested that City residents had expressed the view that they felt marginalised and asked for further information on this. The Assistant Director (Planning & Policy) stated that these comments had originated, in the main part, from Barbican and Golden Lane residents around the fact that they felt that the City was prioritising business needs. The Member commented that he hoped that the Local Plan would help to establish clear residential zones where amenities would be highlighted. In response to further questions, the Assistant Director (Planning & Policy) confirmed that the Barbican Residents Association had submitted a response to the consultation.

The Chairman recognised that many residents (of which there were approximately 8,000 in the City) were strongly of the view that they were not recognised as stakeholders in planning terms. He added that some recent planning applications, particularly those where the City Corporation had been the developer, had, unfortunately, created a strained relationship with residents.

A Member stated that he had hoped to see better engagement from residents in general but added that it was important to note that those responses received suggested that residents were generally happier with the new draft Plan than with the existing version.

The Deputy Chairman stated that he would expect these kinds of views to be voiced more strongly from those based in smaller residential pockets within the City which, it could be argued, were more disadvantaged in terms of having a voice/amenity protection than those in the larger residential areas. It was noted that work around the Cultural Mile had managed to successfully bring together both businesses and residents for a common purpose and that this was something that should be promoted and built upon by the Local Plan.

Members were keen to increase the narrative that the more business there was in the City, the more the City would continue to thrive which would ultimately be of benefit to all, including City residents.

RESOLVED – That Members note the initial headlines from the Local Plan Consultation and that this would be considered in greater detail at their next meeting on a date to be confirmed in May 2018.

5. **TRANSPORT STRATEGY – UPDATE POST-CONSULTATION**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of the Department of the Built Environment providing an update following consultation on the draft Transport Strategy.

The Committee focused discussion around the six key issues raised during the consultation:

Concerns over congestion and air quality impacts of delivering the Strategy

Officers reported that comments received from both residents and organisations had recognised that the Strategy would result in reduced capacity for vehicles in the City which would lead to more congestion and, in turn, impact on air quality. It was reported that no changes to the Strategy were proposed as result of these concerns due to the fact that proposals around this needed to be considered in the round, alongside ambitions to reduce emissions from motor vehicles and reducing general motor traffic and the number of freight vehicles on the City's roads.

The Deputy Chairman stressed the need to push the narrative that the Transport Strategy was focused on prioritising people, safety, sensible speed limits and cycling over concerns around congestion.

In response to a question regarding whether there was any evidence to back up the concerns expressed around air quality, Officers stated that there was not and that these seemed to be based primarily on perception at present.

Members suggested that this should be tracked into the Air Quality Strategy with those expressing concerns as part of this consultation invited to contribute to the Air Quality Strategy consultation too. Officers confirmed that there would be cross reference between the two strategies.

A Member suggested that vehicles utilising the river also needed to be considered in terms of air quality as they often tended to be amongst the most polluting. This would be particularly important as the City continued to promote and encourage more travel by river.

Members went on to discuss the overlap of responsibilities between the Planning and Transportation and Port Health and Environmental Services Committees regarding air quality. It was noted that air quality matters were reported to both Committees and that a PHES representative had also recently been appointed to serve on the Streets and Walkways Sub (Planning and Transportation) Committee. Members stressed the need for Officers to be clear on which Committee would be actioning various air quality matters going forward so that there was no ambiguity or disjointedness around this.

Concerns over access impacts of delivering the Strategy

Officer highlighted the consultation summary document which detailed average scores received from respondents to the consultation and suggested that those with limited mobility had tended to score the proposals lower than other groups. Members were informed that text within the Strategy had been updated to clarify that proposals around pedestrian priority in places did not necessarily mean pedestrianisation. Necessary access for both people and goods would be considered through project delivery.

One Member commented that this was a key concern from his point of view. He went on to refer to the experience of one of his constituents with limited mobility who commuted in to London Bridge station by train but then relied upon taxis to

take him to London Liverpool Street to get to his place of work. He and other constituents had expressed concern around the impact of increased congestion on those who relied upon taxis to make these kinds of journeys due to limited mobility. He therefore stressed the need for greater flexibility here.

Officers reassured Members that definitions of essential traffic included people who needed to use taxis/private taxis to travel due to mobility problems. It was hoped that moves to reduce general traffic would mean that those people could travel more quickly and reliably around the City. Officers reiterated that there was flexibility to look at this on a project by project basis and that each project would be subject to DDA.

Officers went on to stress that the City Corporation were keen to introduce a standard in terms of accessible streets.

A Member suggested that the wording around maintaining appropriate vehicle access be amended to highlight that this was a commitment as opposed to an intention. Members were supportive of this change which Officers undertook to make in the final version of the document. The Member went on to question what were defined as 'essential vehicles'. Officers clarified that essential traffic included buses, freight and services with a destination within the Square Mile, cyclists, taxis and private taxis.

A Member underlined that there would need to be a trade-off, in some circumstances, between personal need and the greater good. She highlighted that this would also require additional focus on the joining up of transport links and bus routes across the City. She added that Bow Lane was now pedestrianised until 6pm with no major impact in terms of travel and that the City was quite compact in terms of getting from one location to another. It was, however, recognised that there were individuals with genuine needs in terms of reduced mobility and that the opportunity for them to travel throughout the City should not be denied.

The Deputy Chairman referred to the Mayor of London's views on taxis but noted that essential taxi use was a different matter and should therefore be considered separately.

It was noted that the younger generation tended to utilise public transport more frequently to travel around the City and the point was made once again that the more convenient and reliable such transport was the more people would opt for this.

Requests to increase the pace of delivery:

Members were informed that these requests related specifically to the cycle network, impact on air quality and the reduction in motor traffic. Officers emphasised that the milestones quoted within the strategy were delivery by dates and that some elements may therefore be delivered ahead of these dates – this would be made clearer within the final document. It was noted that some elements would be delivered in 2019 and 2020.

The delivery of the second phase of the cycle network would be brought forward to 2035 which was felt realistic at this stage. Officers that they were, however, reluctant to commit to faster timescales in other areas beyond what was already stated within the Strategy.

The Chairman stated that it was important to inform people that this was very much a live document looking to drive policy change in these important areas.

A Member questioned what factors were driving the timing around the various different areas. Officers responded that one factor was funding. He added that some proposals were also dependent on delivery in other areas too. For example, in order to meet the standards set around reductions in motor traffic, certain traffic measures would need to be delivered first in order to reduce traffic to 'safe and comfortable' levels. The Member stated that it would be useful to include this narrative and some explanation around timescales where possible.

A Member commented that resourcing would also impact upon delivery in matters such as electric vehicle charging points. She therefore questioned whether Officers had begun to ringfence any funds or flag up likely costs at this stage. Officers reported that the Department of the Built Environment were currently undertaking an exercise to prioritise DBE projects which took into account the Transport Strategy. It was intended that there would be a rolling, three-year, programme coming forward.

Officers concluded by stating that the Delivery Plan for the Strategy would be a separate document.

The treatment of Taxis in the Strategy:

Officers highlighted that responses to the consultation had highlighted that taxis wished to be treated differently to private cars and private hire vehicles. The point that taxis were a door to door, fully accessible mode of transport was acknowledged. Officers highlighted that taxis represented approximately one fifth of vehicles on the City's streets and that taxi access would be considered on a project by project basis. No changes to the Strategy were therefore proposed in response to the comments received here.

Members were of the view that the fact that the strategy defined taxis being used by people with access needs as essential traffic was key and should be sufficiently emphasised.

It was noted that the Mayor of London's view of taxis was not generally favourable and that this was very much a London-wide issue. However, it was agreed that their use in the City should be championed if they were assisting those with access needs. It was also noted that taxis were subject to more intensive regulation than mini cabs meaning that there were distinctions between the two both legally and traditionally.

Officers reiterated that this would be addressed at project level and added that the distinction between taxis and other private hire vehicles was increasingly blurred from a user point of view.

Members recognised that future technological developments may enable cars carrying someone with a recognised disability or access need to be identified and given access to areas that other motor vehicles were not.

The treatment of motorcycles and mopeds in the Strategy:

Officers reported that there had been strong lobbying from motorcycle groups requiring that motorcycles and mopeds be exempt from future access restrictions and road user changes, including emissions related charges. They also suggest that the Strategy should seek to encourage greater use of motorcycles and mopeds to travel around the City.

As with taxi access, it was decided that this should be considered on a case by case basis with no changes to the Strategy proposed in response to the comments received.

It was noted that the responses to the proposals from those travelling on motorcycle or moped within the City were generally less positive when compared to those using other modes of transport.

Officers reported that further work around what prompted such a strong response (generated from a motorcycle action group) was required. A better understanding of why people chose to travel by motorcycle/moped in the City was also needed.

It was noted that electric motorcycle/moped technology was quickly emerging and that the City should look at what it might do to encourage use of such vehicles with the installation of electric charging points and other relevant infrastructure.

The use of motorcycles/mopeds and road safety was also discussed with Members commenting that they often saw users speeding in certain areas of the City and precariously skipping traffic queues. Members went on to discuss courier drivers utilising motorcycles/mopeds and commented that many of these were often driving on provisional licences with no experience of the roads.

Officers confirmed that motorcycle/moped users were termed as 'vulnerable road users' and were over represented in statistics regarding injuries on the road. Whilst there were no statistics to indicate the number of courier drivers using these vehicles on provisional licences only, the assumption was that this was very common. Work around limiting the length of time that such drivers could operate on a provisional licence only was currently underway. TfL were also looking at the matter with the Road Danger Reduction Team and companies such as Deliveroo.

Members were extremely concerned that this was a legal loophole that was currently being exploited and asked that Officers explore with the Remembrancer whether it might be possible to lobby Government on the matter alongside other boroughs.

The Deputy Chairman reported that the concept of regulating the way that delivery drivers were paid (and thereby encouraging them to slow down) had been raised with TfL. Members agreed that it would be important to tackle the 'bigger picture' here.

Suggested removal of the Cycle Superhighway on Upper and Lower Thames Street:

Members were informed that over 500 people had submitted template responses via the 'Unblock the Embankment' website. No changes to the Strategy were proposed as a result of these responses. Members agreed with this view.

A Member commented that this was a well utilised, expensive piece of infrastructure.

A Member questioned the increasing use of motorised scooters and segways in the City on both pavements and roads. Officers reported that, at present, these were not legally permitted although it was noted that there was likely to be a push for legalisation here going forward. It was noted that this might therefore be worth noting as a specific point within the Strategy.

The Chairman reported that the final iteration of the Transport Strategy would be brought to the Planning and Transportation Committee in April 2019. He wished to thank, on behalf of the Sub-Committee, all of the Officers involved in producing the document which he described as an amazing, forward-thinking piece of work that had been incredible well received.

6. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITEE

There were no questions.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no additional, urgent items of business for consideration.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item No
9

Paragraph No(s)
3

9. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2019 were considered and approved as a correct record.

10. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

There were no questions in the non-public session.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB-COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There were no additional, urgent items of business for consideration in the non-public session.

The meeting ended at 11.28 am

Chairman

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